

THIS SPECIAL PLACE

SUMMARY: Students will explore a site, feature, or area in the park and make a list of details that make that site special.

GOAL: For students to develop their ability to notice details that make a national park a special place

OBJECTIVES: Students will (1) be able to generate a list of what makes a specific site in the park special and (2) be able to explain two reasons why the things chosen make the park special.

GRADE LEVEL: Fourth through twelfth

TIME REQUIRED: 45 to 60 minutes

LOCATION: Any site or trail in Lassen Volcanic National Park

MATERIALS: Students will need pencil or pen, paper, and something to write on (clipboard).

SUBJECTS: Science, Language Arts, History/Social Science

KEY WORDS: Outdoor Classroom, National Park, Special

BACKGROUND: Throughout the history of the National Park System people have been inspired by special places that they have felt should be protected as national parks. Lassen Park was established because of its unique volcanic features. Years after it was established, people have continued to discover other attributes that make Lassen a special place worthy of national park status. Each person that visits Lassen remembers something special about it. This activity provides students with the opportunity to draw on their own discoveries and experiences and to share why they feel Lassen is a special place. This activity complements any subject matter or curriculum planned for the field trip. It provides focus and opportunities for emphasizing the purpose and meaning of the visit.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE: Discuss the activity in class before you visit. Be sure students clearly understand the task, materials needed (questions, pencil, something to write answers on, and a place to keep all these things), and what is expected as far as quality of work.

Be sure groups/individuals can spread out enough so they have space/quiet for completing this task. Decide on space boundaries and time limits and have students write them at the top of their papers before they begin so it will be clear that everyone knows the parameters. Then explain that you want the students to make a list of things at the site that they think are special (plants, animals, mountains, streams, sounds, colors, etc.). They need to also explain why they think each item is special. They need to be specific in their answers. Back in class, have the students share and compare their lists. As a class discuss and make a list of things that make Lassen a special place.

EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT: (1) Formulate questions about the site for further discussion or

research with your class. (2) Have the students write a story using their list from the field trip. (3) Have the students make a list of what is special at school, home, or community. Compare this list to the list they made at Lassen Park. (4) Have the students pretend that the site is going to be their classroom for a full school year. From their list, have them write questions about things they do not completely understand or want to study more. (5) Considering all the subjects studied in school (such as math, PE, science, history, etc.), which ones could Lassen Park provide as a well-rounded outdoor classroom? Using the questions from their lists, ask the students to list the subjects that could be incorporated into each question.

ASSESSMENT: Student notes and lists from this activity provide samples for assessment and inclusion in portfolios. A thorough assessment could be provided by having the students write a story about the site using their notes from their on-site visit; it could be titled "This Special Place" or whatever they choose. Another effective way to incorporate this activity into the assessment process is to have the whole class make a list of what they saw, experienced, and learned. Then each student should use this brainstorm list to make a final entry in his/her journal summarizing the trip. Some of the ideas in the enrichment section above may also prove to be effective assessment tools.